GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:409
ANSWERED ON:26.04.2016
Starvation Deaths in Tea Gardens of West Bengal
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Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of hunger/starvation deaths have been reported from the tea gardens of West Bengal during the last one year inviting adverse observations from the Supreme Court on food distress situation therein, if so, the details thereof and the remedial measures being taken in this regard;
(b) whether any discussions have been held with the State in this regard for providing relief to the garden workers/farmers, if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and
(c) whether the Government proposes to provide any Central Assistance to the State in this regard and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)
(a) to (c): No State Government/Union Territory Administration including West Bengal has reported any incident of death due to starvation.
However, to eradicate the problem of hunger/starvation and to provide food security to the vulnerable population, the Government has been providing food grains at highly subsidized prices to the targeted population through State Governments/Union Territory Administrations under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) such as Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, Annapurna Scheme etc.
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During the year 2015-16, the Govt. of India has so far allocated 611.10 lakh tons of foodgrains under TPDS and OWS. This includes allocation of 496.77 lakh tons under TPDS/NFSA, 50.01 lakh tons additional APL and BPL allocation, 11.70 lakh tons for natural calamities, additional TPDS requirements etc., and 52.62 lakh tons of foodgrains under OWS. During the current year 2016-17, the Govt. of India has so far allocated 573.41 lakh tons of foodgrains under TPDS/ NFSA and OWS.`
To further strengthen the efforts to address the food security of the people, Government of India has notified the National Food Security Act, 2013 on 10th September, 2013. The act provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for receiving foodgrains at subsidized prices of Rs.3,2 & 1 per Kg for rice, wheat & coarse grains respectively under Targeted Public Distribution System(TPDS), thus covering about two-third of the population.
The Act also has a special focus on nutritional support to women and children, Pregnant women and lactating mothers will be entitled to meals as nutritional norms as well as to receive maternity benefit of not less than Rs. 6,000. Children upto 14 years of age will be entitled to nutritious meals or take home rations as per the prescribed nutritional standards. In case of non supply of entitled foodgrains or meals, the beneficiaries will received food security allowance.
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